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THREE MARSHALL ISLANDERS TO BE AT
BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

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Three people from Rongelap in the Marshall Islands of the Pacific have been brought to the medical research center of AEC's Brookhaven National Laboratory at Upton, Long Island, New York, for examination and treatment. They have nodules in their thyroid glands which appear to be the result of exposure to fallout radiation from a nuclear detonation 11 years ago.

A total of 82 people of Rongelap Atoll were accidentally exposed to fallout radiation from a thermonuclear device tested on March 1, 1954. The average whole body exposure was approximately 175 reentgens, and additional amounts of radiation resulted from absorption of radioiodine in the thyroid glands. Since that time the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands have sponsored annual medical surveys of the exposed people. The surveys are carried out by a Brookhaven National Laboratory team, headed by Robert A. Conrad, M.D.

Immediately after exposure the people were evacuated to Kujalein Island for treatment and were subsequently on Majuro Atoll until 1957 when they were returned to Rongelap. On their return to their home atoll the United States provided them with a new village and other facilities and services to assist their re-establishment. The current population of Rongelap is about 228 persons. On April 30, 1965, Congress appropriated \$950,000 as "compassionate relief" payment to the 82 persons who were exposed.

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Medical examination in March, 1964, revealed that three girls 13 to 14 years old had developed nodules in their thyroid glands. Following surgery at the U.S. Naval Hospital on Guam, the girls were returned to Rongelap. The nodules were not malignant. A medical report based on these appeared in a May, 1965, issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The three recent cases were detected in March, 1965. Two of them are in boys 12 and 17 years old and the other in a woman aged 41. The patients are being accompanied during their trip by Dr. John Iman, a Marshallese practitioner, who will serve as interpreter. It is anticipated that the Marshall Islanders will be in this country only a month or so. They arrived in Hawaii on June 15 en route from the Marshall Islands to Brookhaven.

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